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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/NCE DKOSTELANCIK AND MSESSUMS
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DOE FOR TYACKE AND BOLSHINSKY
DOD FOR OSD/POLICY HSTRAUSS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TRGY](#) [KNNP](#) [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [PL](#) [IAEA](#)

SUBJECT: POLAND: DOE OFFICIALS DISCUSS SPENT REACTOR FUEL
DISPOSITION

1. Econoff attended a meeting of DOE officials Michael Tyacke and Igor Bolshinsky and GOP officials from the National Atomic Energy Agency (PAA), State Treasury, and Radioactive Waste Management Authority on 26 January 2006. Tyacke and Bolshinsky presented information on the DOE's Russian Research Reactor Fuel Return (RRRFR) Program, created to repatriate Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) spent fuel to Russia. PAA Director Dr. Jerzy Niewodniczanski chaired the meeting and showed interest in pursuing GOP participation in the program. Both sides agreed to move forward, noting the timeline for completing all necessary agreements could take more than three years.

2. Responsibility for nuclear fuel is parceled out to three entities in the GOP. The PAA oversees all safety and regulatory issues and acts as liaison between the GOP and the IAEA. The State Treasury is responsible for the disposal of used radioactive material, and the Ministry of Economy supervises the research and use of radioactive material. Poland has three nuclear research reactors, only one of which, Maria, is currently operational. The GOP has never shipped any nuclear material back to Russia, and so has quite a bit stored. In fact, Tyacke and Bolshinsky said that there are more than 1,000 HEU assemblies in Poland, each holding about 50 grams of HEU. The RRRFR stipulates a cutoff date of 2010, by which time all HEU must be repatriated. Poland must begin negotiating now in order to meet this deadline.

3. Poland's first step is to negotiate the smaller agreements that will allow DOE to begin the project's preparatory work. The first agreement of this type is a "preparation" contract governing technical surveys of Poland HEU stockpile. The GOP will also need to assume complete liability for all work done during the project, which relieves the USG of any liability. This can be accomplished through a WMD Treaty or other means. The GOP will also need to ensure that no taxes are levied on any USG assistance, money, or equipment that is provided to Poland during the project. The most politically challenging move, according to Tyacke and Bolshinsky, will be to negotiate with the GOP concerning conditions and costs of repatriating and storing the HEU. Once the HEU is repatriated to a Russian facility it will be blended and sealed in glass encasements for a period of twenty years, during which time the materials is simply too hot to move. The fate of the material after this twenty-year period is open to negotiation between the GOP and GOP. Tyacke and Bolshinsky noted these agreements are often difficult to reach, due to the uncertain costs of storing and monitoring spent fuel over such a long period of time. The resulting information asymmetry can lead to breakdowns in trust between negotiating parties.

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